

Massachusetts Workforce Development Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 14, 2016
9:00am to 11:00am

The GEM Group
9 International Way
Lawrence, MA

Members Present:

Aixa Beauchamp, Jesse Brown, Tricia Canavan, James Cassetta, Donna Cupelo, Sherry Dong, Eileen Donoghue, Kimberley Driscoll, Cassius Johnson, Robert LePage, Susan Mailman, Adelaide Osborne, Carol Ozelius, Joanne Pokaski, Dan Rivera, Elizabeth Skidmore, Juan Vega, Ronald Walker, Ray Wrobel.

Members Absent:

Joanne Berwald, Kristin Broadley, Anne Broholm, Gerard Burke, Kathleen Cullen-Cote, Driscoll DoCanto, Pam Eddinger, Eric Hagopian, John Mann, Juliette Mayers, Beth Mitchell, Warren Pepicelli, Joseph Wagner, Beth William,

Staff & Guests:

Gail Brown (Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board), Pahola DeLeon (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development), Jennifer James-Price (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development), Kara Keefe (Office of Senator Donoghue) Louise Lynch (MA Department of Transitional Assistance), Kevin Madden (South Coastal Career Development Administration), Allison McIntyre (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development), Ken Messina (Department of Career Services), David Muldrew (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development), Rory O'Hanlon (Office of Chairman Joseph Wagner), Nathan Pham (Verizon New England), Susan Quinones (MA Workforce Professional Association), Raghida Ramey (Department of Unemployment Assistance), Kimberly Rowe- Cummings (MA Department of Transitional Assistance), Cheryl Scott (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development), Ethan Snow (New England Joint Board UNITE HERE), Nancy Snyder (Commonwealth Corporation), Alice Sweeney (Department of Career Services) Jeffrey Turgeon (Central MA Workforce Investment Board), Olga Yulikova (Executive office of Elder Affairs), Marina Zhavoronkova (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development).

Meeting Minutes

Welcome & Introductions

Donna Cupelo called the meeting to order, and welcomed board members and guests. All members and guests introduced themselves. Jonathan Issacson, President of Gemline, also welcomed all members and guests to his facility and provided an overview of his company. Donna Cupelo reviewed the Board's calendar year 2016 work and accomplishments where she highlighted the key areas of work and deliverables for each committee as well as the plans ahead for 2017. Donna Cupelo hoped for 2017 to be a year of action in which the Board will be making recommendations and working to enhance the workforce system. Ms. Cupelo turned the floor over to Cheryl Scott who reviewed the meeting agenda.

Workforce Development Update

Secretary Ronald Walker, II thanked Cheryl Scott and Donna Cupelo for their work on behalf of the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board. He thanked members of the Board for their participation on the board and on the committees. He also gave thanks to Jonathan Issacson for hosting the Board's quarterly meeting.

Secretary Walker shared that EOLWD is working on implementing the various initiatives that have been announced over the course of the year. The Workforce Skills Cabinet is working with their partners in education and economic development to make sure they are aligning human and capital resources to ensure impact. The state's unemployment rate is at 3.3%, the best that it has been in 15 years and labor participation rate is at 64.9%. Looking ahead to 2017, the Workforce Skills Cabinet and Governor Baker's BizWorks team along with the Demand 2.0 model are working with companies such as State Street and Amazon to help them fill jobs. In 2016 \$12 Million from the Workforce Skills Capital Grant Program was awarded to community colleges and vocational schools for skill building. Secretary Walker noted that these grants help to build skills for people to get jobs. This is the critical work that EOLWD will like to continue in 2017.

Secretary Walker gave thanks to Undersecretary of Workforce Development Jennifer James, Executive Director Cheryl Scott and Director of the Department of Career Services Alice Sweeney on coordinating 15 government agencies to work together on the WIOA State Plan. Secretary Walker also mentioned Regional Planning where partners are working at a regional level to align economic development, education and workforce development to direct resources and strategies to ensure they are being used to address the real needs of the Commonwealth's regions. That process will kick off in February 2017 with a kick-off event with Governor Baker and all the key stakeholders; these will be followed by planning meetings in the 7 planning regions to implement the process. The expectation is that all regions will develop a blueprint on how each of the regions will work together on job sector growth.

Donna Cupelo provided an update of her and Secretary Walker's meeting with Senate President Stanley Rosenberg and Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo. This was a great opportunity for Donna Cupelo and Secretary Walker to update the legislative leadership on all of the work that the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board has done thus far and to gain an understanding on the legislature's key priorities. Some of the topics discussed were the "cliff effect" where people who are on public assistance have trouble transitioning to employment or career advancement for fear of losing some or all of their benefits such as child care and housing.

Review and Approval of September 2016 Meeting Minutes

Donna Cupelo asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes for the Workforce Development Board September 20th 2016 meeting. The motion was raised, and passed unanimously.

Economic Opportunity Committee Update

Aixa Beauchamp, co-chair of the Economic Opportunity Committee (EOC), provided an update on the key deliverables the Economic Opportunity Committee has been working on thus far. The EOC reviewed the 2015 report on *Task Force on Populations Facing Chronically High Rates of Unemployment* which provided various recommendations on how the Commonwealth can improve employment outcomes for the Task Force's target populations (African Americans/Blacks, Hispanics/Latinos, Native Americans, people with disabilities, Veterans.) To hone in on specific deliverables for the committee, members were surveyed on their areas of interest for the short-, medium-, and long-term. The first deliverable that the EOC decided to focus on is the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF), a demand-driven strategy that invests in training and education programs to train unemployed and underemployed workers for jobs that are in demand. The committee will explore opportunities for applying the model to enhance employment opportunities for the target populations based on reported progress and outcomes from the FY 17 WTCF funding. The other deliverable recommended by the EOC is the Career Readiness Initiative, a statewide, multi-agency initiative aimed to enhance work readiness skills and improve employment outcomes for low-skilled and/or unemployed individuals. The EOC will be focus on enhancing the employer engagement of the Career Readiness Initiative, as well as look at outcomes and sustainability of the initiative. The committee also wanted to learn more about the Business Engagement Model and look into more public-private partnerships to expand funding opportunities. A board member asked Nancy Snyder from Commonwealth Corporation if the WCTF Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was related to the MWDB. Nancy explained that the WCTF RFQ is for year 2017 focusing on people with limited or no attachment to the labor force for the past 3-5 years and are part of the target populations from the task force and of the EOC. Nancy provided more detail about the RFQ and also mentioned that another

RFQ will be coming out that uses Health Care Workforce Transformation Funds dollars with the same population focusing on health care occupations. Liz Skidmore asked if women have ever been considered to be a target population. Nancy explains that the WCTF is not specific around gender, and the main focus is people with limited or no attachment to the labor force in the past 3-5 years. Only two WCTF projects can be funded this year and particular attention will be paid to funding projects that attract both men and women.

WIOA Oversight Committee Update

Secretary Walker provided an update on the key deliverables that the WIOA Oversight Committee will be focusing on. The first deliverable will be developing a workforce system performance dashboard. This dashboard will provide the board with a clear understanding of the status of all the activities and programs that are taking place. Undersecretary of Workforce Development Jennifer James explains that the dashboard will be focused on outputs, outcomes and impacts. The WIOA Oversight Committee will have the ability to make recommendations to the full board regarding which areas require more work and which areas require a change of course based on the outcomes and impacts. Some of the committee discussion includes a focus on how outcomes lead to impact, what are some of the data elements that are available not only to EOLWD but to all the other partnering agencies and what are the breakdowns and ways to present the information that is relevant. A student from the Harvard Kennedy School was brought in to assist with the dashboard design. Undersecretary James also provided an update on some of the work being done related to the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). A memorandum of understanding (MOU) will be mandated across all of the state and federal partners. The purpose of the MOU is to begin to document the vision, service strategy, and the cost sharing that the various partners will be providing in the different regions to better support job seekers and businesses. The WIOA Oversight committee serves as the body that receives appeals if a region cannot come to an agreement on their MOU, if regional designation is denied, and if bidder would like to dispute the outcomes of the Career Center operator selection process. To conclude the WIOA Oversight committee update, Raymond Wrobel and Gail Brown, Chair and Executive Director of the Greater Lowell Workforce Investment Board, respectively, provided a brief overview of WIOA implementation from a local area perspective. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was released for the bid of the one stop career center operator. There is a review committee that consisted of a number of Board members, that reviewed and scored the bids. Gail Brown shared that one of the challenges of this process is the timeline. If a new career center operator is to be put in place by July 1st, 2017, there is only a short window of time to make that transition from the existing operator. Gail Brown also talks about how WIOA implementation provides an opportunity to implement new ideas, new strategies, new ways to be more demand driven, and an opportunity to align resources to meet the needs of businesses and job seekers.

Workforce System Re-Branding Initiative

Marina Zhavoronkova, Assistant Secretary for Program and Performance Management provided a briefing of the workforce system re-branding initiative. The branding initiative is an effort to improve access and visibility of the public workforce system to a variety of audiences. The contexts that lead the Executive Office of Labor & Workforce Development (EOLWD) to pursue this strategy are the following; employers are unable to meet hiring demands in technology, biotech, health care, finance, manufacturing and other industries. Segments of the Massachusetts population face higher than average rates of unemployment, many hourly and part-time employees are looking for full-time work, and 129,000 people are still unemployed. Also, inconsistent branding permeates state, regional, and local workforce systems. Lastly, business and jobseeker customers lack awareness of the depth, breadth, and interconnectedness of public workforce resources available in the Commonwealth. Assistant Secretary Zhavoronkova provided an overview of the Massachusetts WIOA state plan mandate to “create better branding/promotion of the services afforded by One-Stop Career Centers”. This re-branding will allow the state to meet its goal of “increasing talent recruitment and hiring for business partners through business outreach, candidate referrals, and education & training services that match business needs.” A unified brand of the workforce system is expected to: (1) communicate the depth, breadth, and connectivity of our workforce system to multiple audiences; (2) capture a joint mission and vision of the Massachusetts public workforce system; (3) provide a visual and cultural unification of the Massachusetts workforce system; (4) improve visibility and understanding to jobseekers and employers; (5) lead to an increase in interactions with jobseekers and employers and lead to improve morale, accountability, and performance among employees. Ms. Zhavoronkova then reviewed the EOLWD-led process to select a consultant to lead the workforce system through a re-branding process that is expected to take about a year. A Branding Advisory Group of internal stakeholders has been convened to guide the work, and state workforce board members are invited to join. It is also expected that the WIOA Oversight Committee will receive regular updates on re-branding efforts, and determine when/if the entire MWDB needs to be engaged. It is expected that the full MWDB will vote for and select the “brand” for the workforce system.

Donna Cupelo adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.